

MORNING STAR

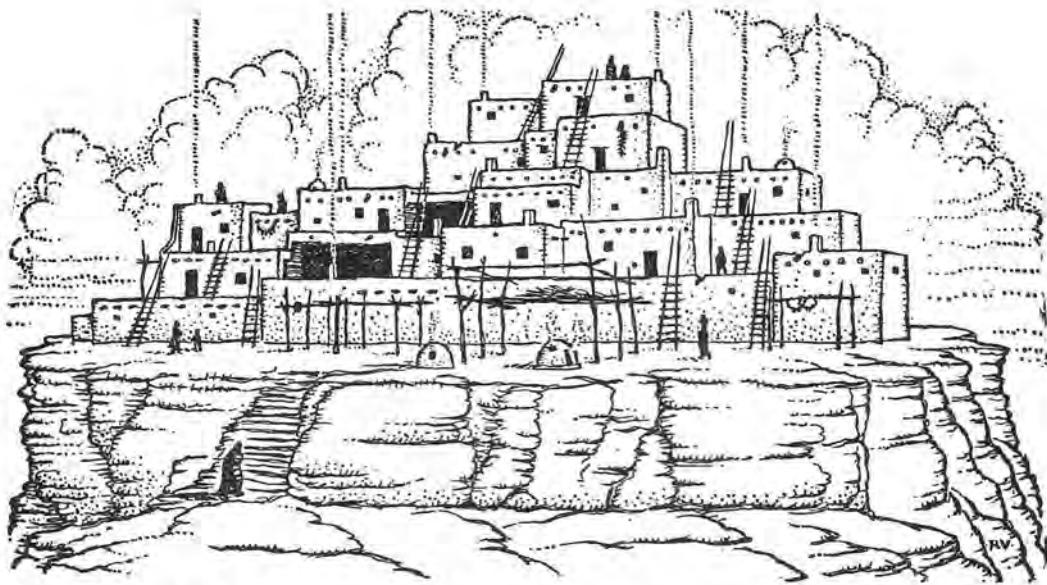
A Little Pueblo Girl



ROGER
VERNAM

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MORNING STAR—A LITTLE PUEBLO GIRL

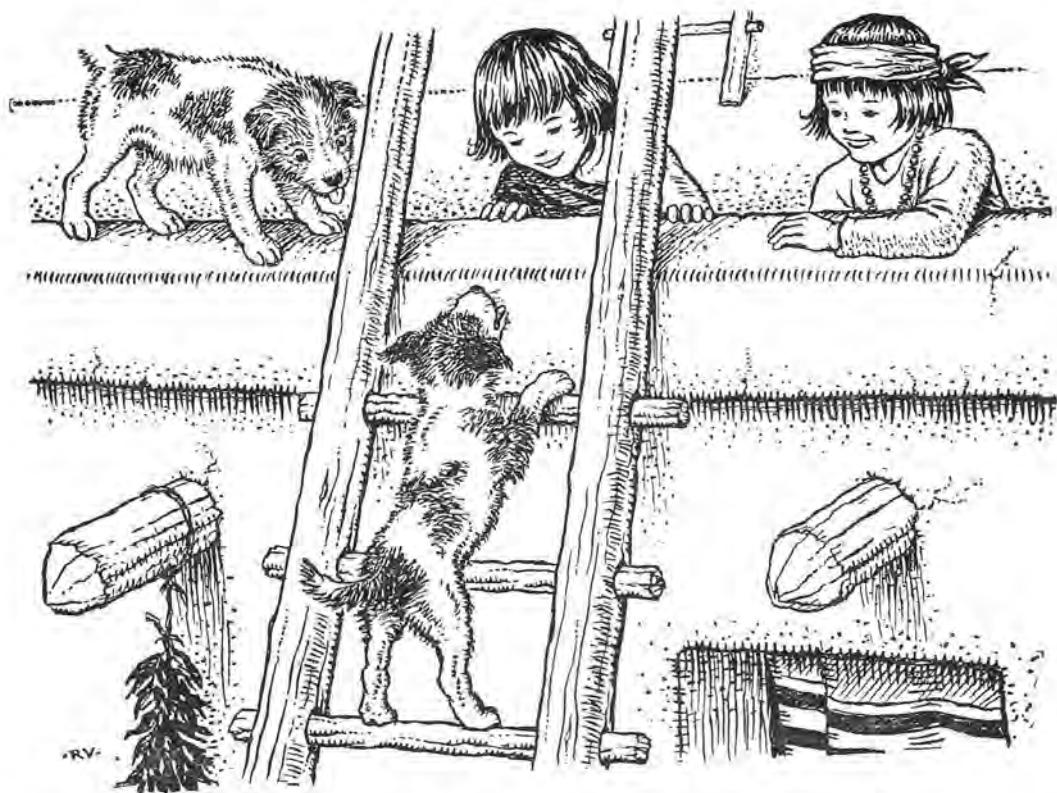
Morning Star was a little Moki girl. The Moki Indians live in the Southwestern part of the United States, in big apartment houses called pueblos. "Pueblo" is the Spanish word for "village." The Spaniards were the first white people to visit this part of our country and they gave names to many of the things they found there.

The apartment house was built on the edge of a high cliff. The top of the cliff was flat. These flat-topped hills are called tablelands or mesas. "Mesa" is the Spanish word for "table."

The first floor had no windows and no doors in the wall. Nobody lived in it. It was used as a storeroom. The only light in it came from some small holes high up in the wall and from a trapdoor in the roof.



The second story, where Morning Star lived, was set back as though it were the second step in a flight of stairs. To get into her home, Morning Star climbed a ladder that leaned against the roof of the first floor. Then she walked



across the roof to a door in the wall. To get into the store-room, she went through the trapdoor and down a ladder inside the room.

Pueblo children learn to climb almost as soon as they learn to walk. Even the dogs of the pueblos, go up and down the ladders.

At the bottom of the cliff Morning Star's father, Two Bears, had a garden. He grew cotton and squash and beans and corn of many colors. There were white ears and black ears. Others were yellow, or blue, or pink, or red, and some were speckled.



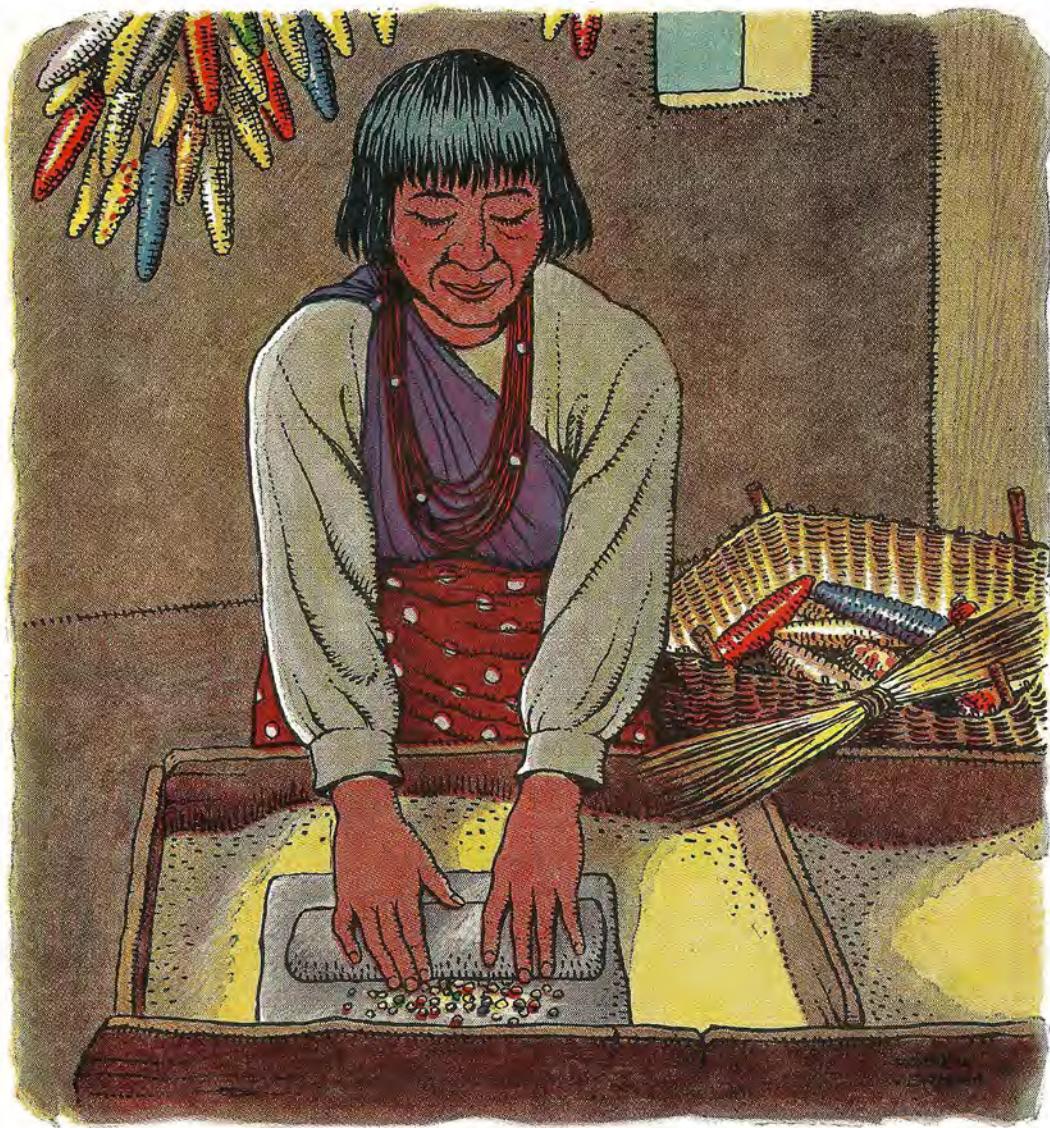
There was little rain in the Moki country, and the sun shone down very hot most of the year. So, long before Morning Star was born, the men of the pueblo had dug ditches from a river, to bring water to their gardens.

Morning Star liked to climb down the side of the mesa, when her father was working in his garden. Near the top, the cliff was almost as steep as the side of a house. The Indians who first chose the mesa for their home, had cut little steps or toeholds in the rock. As Morning Star went down, she put her toes and fingers into the little holes. It was almost like going down a ladder.

Morning Star spent most of her time on top of the mesa



with her mother, White Pigeon. She liked to watch her mother make bread. When she was going to bake, White Pigeon ground the colored corn between two stones. She mixed this meal with water to make a thin batter. Then



she put into the fire a flat stone with a smooth top, like a pancake griddle.

When the stone was well heated White Pigeon poured a little of the batter on it and spread it very thin. It cooked



in just a second or two, and when she pulled it off, it looked like a round sheet of paper. While the second wafer was cooking, she folded the first over and over until it made a roll about the size of an ear of corn. This was the bread Morning Star ate almost every day. She liked it very much.

When White Pigeon had finished her housework, she made pottery from moist clay. She made all the dishes the family used. There were small bowls from which they ate. And there were larger bowls in which White Pigeon mixed bread or cooked meat or vegetables. The most interesting things she made were tall jars for holding or carrying water.



When she needed water, White Pigeon put one of these jars on top of her head. She walked across the roof and climbed down the ladder. Then she walked across the top of the mesa to the pool. Here she filled the jar and went back to her home. And all the time she was walking or climbing up or down the ladder, she did not even touch the jar with her hands.

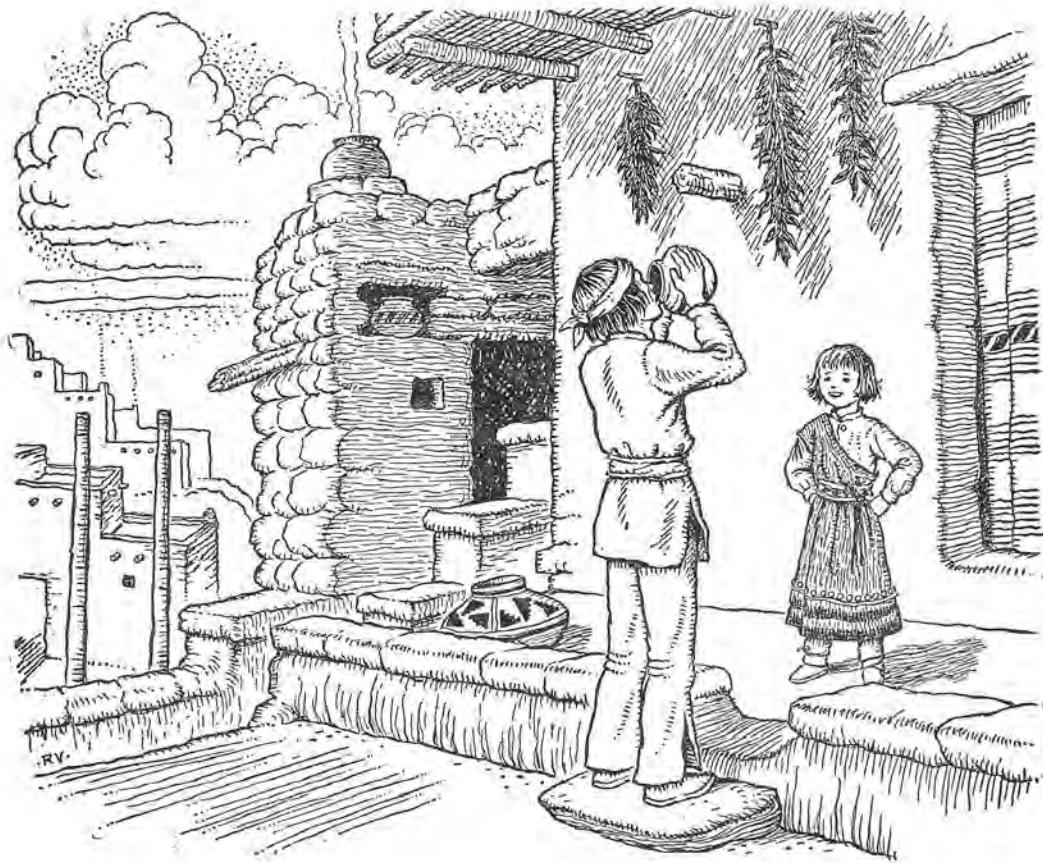
Morning Star had often watched her mother making water jars. One day she decided she would make a little one for herself. She broke off a piece of the moist clay and rolled it into a ball. She flattened this out on the ground. Then she broke off another piece and rolled it into a long strip like a very large pencil.



She laid this strip around the edge of the flat piece and rubbed them together until they were smooth. Then she put another strip on top of the first. In this way she made her jar as tall as she wanted it. When it was finished, she

buried it in the sand and built a little fire over it. The next day, when she dug it up, it was baked hard.

At first, when she put it on top of her head, she had to steady it with her hand. But soon she was able to balance it perfectly, without touching it. Soon she was able to go to the pool with White Pigeon every day and carry home fresh water for Two Bears to drink when he climbed up, hot and thirsty, from working in his garden.





MORNING STAR

Now would't it seem strange to you
To climb a ladder high

To get into your little house
Built way up near the sky?

But "Morning Star" is used to it
She's nimble as can be,—

And when she's up above the world
There's such a lot to see.